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Poverty, attainment and wellbeing

Citation for published version:

Mowat, J & MacLeod, G 2019, Poverty, attainment and wellbeing: Making a difference to the lives of children and young people. Scottish Universities Insight Institute.

Link:

[Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

Document Version:

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

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mobilising knowledge for a better Scotland



Young people from St Rose of Lima Primary School

Poverty, attainment and wellbeing: Making a difference to the lives of children and young people

Final Project Report

May 2019

<https://www.scottishinsight.ac.uk/Programmes/OpenCall201819/PEAW.aspx>

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The programme team would like to thank all of the agencies involved and SUIL.



1. Setting the Context

In Scotland, 2018 was designated the Year of Young People. Yet, we know that for many children living in poverty their life chances are significantly reduced, reflected in poorer mental health and wellbeing [1] and academic outcomes [2]. Focussing on attainment alone will not solve the problem: a holistic focus upon children and their wellbeing within the contexts of public policy, families, schools and communities is essential [3]. We have chosen to focus on early adolescence as this represents a critical stage in children's development [4, 5] when peer victimization [6] and mental health issues [7] often come to the fore, impacted by adverse childhood experiences [8, 9].

This is a complex international problem [10-12], articulated within the United Nation's global goals for sustainability [13], requiring a multi-disciplinary focus. The seminar series focussed on one of the Scottish Government's key policies – the Scottish Attainment Challenge, addressed through a wide range of legislation and initiatives [14, 15].

Through hosting a series of three international seminars (one held over two days) and working with children and young people in St Rose of Lima Primary School, Glasgow City Council and Inverclyde Academy, focussing on their sense of belonging to school, we have sought to cast light on this complex problem.

2. Programme Aims and Objectives

The seminar series sought to:

- Examine, through multiple disciplines and drawing upon the perspectives of academics, early adolescents, practitioners, the 3rd sector and policy makers, how the relationship between poverty, attainment and children's mental health and wellbeing is currently understood, particularly as it pertains to early adolescence, and how this understanding might be extended.
- Examine how a child's sense of belonging to school impacts upon their mental health and wellbeing and attainment.
- Enable new insights to inform international and national policy about how to address the attainment gap associated with poverty.
- Create lasting networks to foster partnership working and to create opportunities for future collaborative research.

3. Programme Activities, Insights and Outputs

3.1 Research Briefings

Three research briefings have been produced to disseminate the findings of the seminar series drawing on an extensive range of evidence:

1. Insights from presentations and contributions, including panel discussions
2. Insights from discussion groups
3. Insights from responses to posed questions by participants:

- What is the main message that you will take away from this seminar to inform your practice?
 - What is the main message that you would want to give to the Scottish Government to inform policy in this area?
 - What will you do differently as a result?
4. Insights from the film of the work of children in Glasgow and Inverclyde
 5. Insights from graphic representations of the seminar days.

Briefing 1: Poverty, attainment and wellbeing: Implications for policy makers

Briefing 2: Poverty, attainment and wellbeing: Implications for children's services

Briefing 3: Poverty, attainment and wellbeing: Implications for schools

3.2 Three International Seminars

The seminars systematically explored the relationships between poverty, attainment and children's mental health and wellbeing in order to understand the drivers of these relationships, lying at the intersection, as illustrated in figure 1.

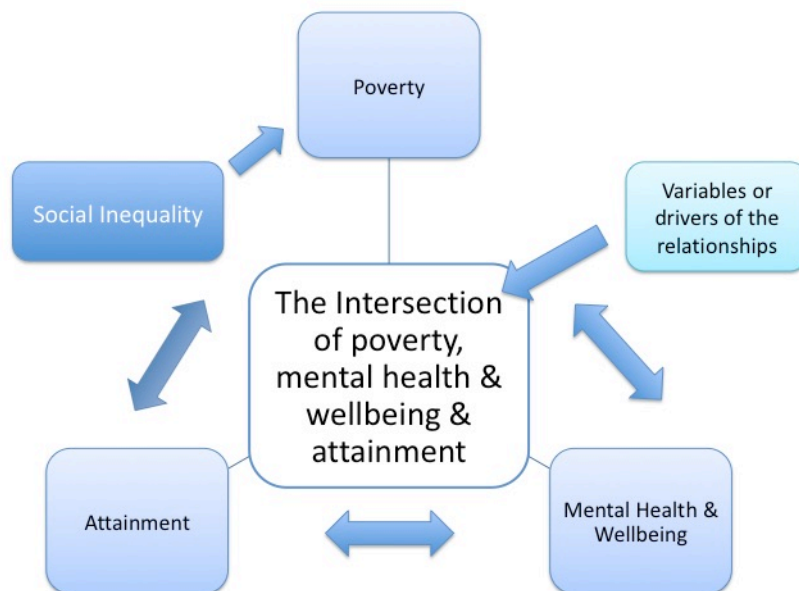


Figure 1: The relationships explored within the seminar series

Seminar 1: Poverty and Attainment

This seminar, facilitated by Professor John McKendrick and hosted at the University of Strathclyde, focussed on the relationship between poverty and attainment. Key inputs were from:

- Dr Morag Treanor, University of Stirling
- Professor John McKendrick, Glasgow Caledonian University
- Sara Spencer, Child Poverty Action Group Scotland
- Molly Page, City of Edinburgh Council
- Lindsay Graham, Child Poverty Food Advisor
- Lauren Johnston, Renfrewshire Council

Key Messages

The quest to close the attainment gap cannot be solved by schools alone or schools in isolation of other public services [3, 16, 17]. It requires a political solution and one which places at its heart the drive to eradicate childhood poverty. The scope of the problem is global and it is ever evolving [12]. The Scottish Government's commitment to eradicating child poverty by 2030 through the Child Poverty (Scotland) Bill is to be welcomed but it is important to look at the 'bigger picture' and how different policies interact and can conflict with each other.

Tackling the attainment gap associated with childhood poverty requires a multi-dimensional, inter-disciplinary and inter-sectoral solution and strong partnerships between schools, external agencies and parents



[3, 16, 17]. A key priority is to further understanding of poverty and the impact that it has on children's lives and to counter the myths and misconceptions which surround it, such as the assumption that parents living in poverty do not have aspirations for their children [18]. It requires a focus not only on practical solutions to alleviate and mitigate against the impact of poverty in children's lives (such as exemplified through the 'Cost of the School Day' project) but a focus on ethos and culture within the school in order to tackle the stigma associated with poverty and develop empathy. Amongst all of the statistics, it is important to remember that it is ultimately about people – about communities, families and children and their experience of their lives in the here and now and in the future. How

"Start where you are and do what you can."

Everyone can make a difference no matter how big or small. Getting this understanding out there is crucial. Every interaction with a child can make a difference.

We need to remove traditional barriers to address this problem – multidisciplinary / multi-sectoral partnership working is needed to address the complexity.

Deeper awareness of the depth and intricacies of children's poverty. Critical role of relationships in young peoples' lives and in the way those involved in poverty research, policy and practice engage.

Policy to support young people needs to be long-term, funded for a long time, multi-disciplinary and research informed.

Help us! Policy aims (NIF, GIRFEC, etc.) are noble, ethical and right but we teachers are struggling to meet expectations from every quarter ...

we engage with children and families matters and can help to ameliorate the negative impact of poverty in children's lives. An optimistic outlook is important. There is much sterling work going on in schools across Scotland but there is a need to ensure that finite resources are being spent wisely and judiciously and impact is sustainable. Ultimately, it is not about 'projects' and time-limited funding but about large-scale systemic change.

Parental and child engagement and participation are necessary for any meaningful, long lasting change.

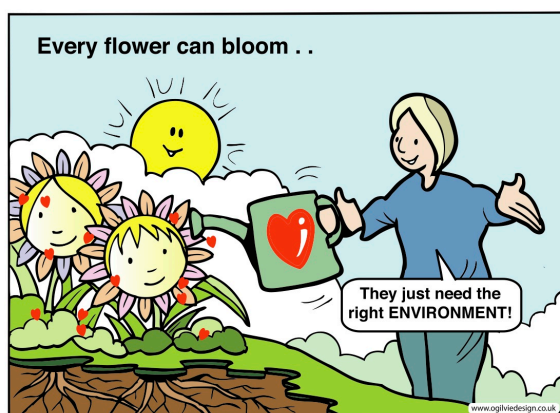
Seminar 2: Poverty and Mental Health and Wellbeing

This seminar, facilitated by Marian MacLeod, formerly of Children in Scotland, and hosted at the University of Edinburgh, focussed on the relationship between poverty and children and young people's mental health and wellbeing. Key inputs were from:

- Professor Jane Callaghan, University of Stirling
- Dr Louise Marryat, University of Edinburgh
- Professor Matt Smith, University of Strathclyde
- Sarah Ogdon, former Headteacher, Pinkie Primary School, East Lothian
- Dr Michael Smith, Associate Director for Mental Health, NHS Glasgow and Clyde
- Dr Duncan Booker, Glasgow Lead for Resilient Cities
- Dr Trevor Lakey, Health Improvement and Inequalities, NHS Glasgow and Clyde
- Linda Irvine, Strategic Programme Manager, NHS Lothian

The day culminated with a panel discussion with representation from the above plus Dr Gillean McCluskey, University of Edinburgh and Jonathan Wood, Director of Place2Be.

Key Messages



discussions. Key themes of the day were resilience, from the level of urban environments to the individual, and the impact of adverse childhood experiences on children's and young people's lives. The importance of

"Ten capabilities" are more helpful than ten ACEs to tick. We need to change school / civic culture so that systems support positive relationships, individuals' sense of agency and community engagement.

That it is complicated – lots of brilliant work. I worry about how joined up all this activity is – especially when Scottish Government policy is struggling to balance the individual and the community.

It's complex and there are no easy answers. However, there is lots we can do individually and collectively to build capacity both at an individual and a community / societal level.

We need to give people (teachers) permission to do what they know is right, what is intuitive as they know their children / families best. Attainment cannot just be about academic success!

Whilst schools can – and are – playing an important role in

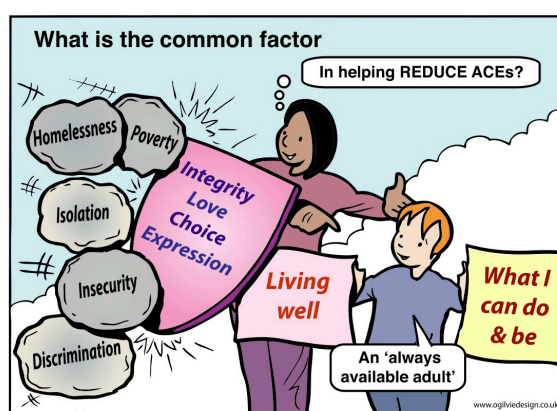
An extensive and broad range of issues emerged from this seminar, reflecting the complexity of the issues under consideration. However, some very strong groundswells of opinion emerged from the contributions and

raising awareness of the impact of trauma and ameliorating its impact in children and young people's lives was not in dispute but what was in dispute was the means of achieving this end. Professor Jane Callaghan provided a strong critique of the ACEs agenda raising concerns about the tendency to individualise and to not take account of the social-cultural and political context which shapes the experience of communities, families and children and which may be a critical factor in the production of ACEs. The general call for poverty to be considered as an ACE was strongly rejected by Dr Morag Treanor on the basis that poverty should be considered as a structural issue which requires a political solution. It may be summed up in the contribution of Sarah Ogdon, former headteacher at Pinkie Primary School, E Lothian, 'When a flower doesn't bloom you fix the environment, NOT the flower.'

Dr Louise Marryat highlighted that children from disadvantaged backgrounds start school with poorer mental health and levels of mental health difficulties get worse over the first 3 years of primary schooling [1]. What

can we do to change this? Drawing from the resilient cities transnational project, it was mooted that cities are both the locus and the solution to mental health difficulties. Drawing on the strength of the community and fostering a sense of belonging are important aspects of building resilience. Having a stable adult in the life of the child can help to reduce the impact of ACEs in children's lives and help them to develop resilience [9, 19]. We need to have an overt focus on inequalities and equity and be responsive and sensitive to cultural and historical aspects of communities. We need to consider adverse childhood experiences within a broader capabilities framework, directing us towards more holistic and effective responses [19]. These messages resonate also for the community that is the school, focussing on building strong social networks; strong infrastructures around schools (in terms of access to services); strong relationships and fostering a sense of belonging in children and young people [3].

In summary, the relationship between poverty, mental health and adverse childhood experiences is complex and we need to avoid over-simplistic solutions which may not do justice to the problem. Poverty is a structural issue but we all have a responsibility individually and collectively towards eradicating childhood poverty and mitigating against its impact in the lives of children and young people. There are no simple solutions to the problem and we need to be sensitive to context when adopting 'off-the-shelf' packages. A pro-active approach focussing on fostering capabilities may



"closing the gap", it must be at a societal level whereby universal agencies are adequately funded and in a position to work in collaboration with their communities and sectors.

Staff in schools are working their socks off going above and beyond the call of duty to continually support children and young people and PEF / SAC money is being used innovatively to support this. However, we have been trying to be proactive with supporting young children for years – calling on other services to support us e.g. CAMHS, social work, etc. and children and young people cannot get the support due to cuts in resources in universal services. Schools are then working doubly hard under even more pressure!

We need to build more rigour into the way we gather information about what is already working in the system to support and challenge the difficulties brought about by poverty. There are a lot of things happening in thousands of schools across Scotland and partnership working and better communication across different parts of the system is absolutely key to moving forward. Universities being involved in the development of policies

have greater impact than reacting to ACEs in children and young people's lives. Relationships and community matter. We need to aim for values-led practice, respecting and providing opportunities to build children's agency, fostering engagement and belonging within 'kind communities' and 'kind schools.'

and practices moving forward is absolutely key.

Seminar 3: The Intersection of Poverty, Attainment and Mental Health and Wellbeing

This two-day seminar, facilitated by Dr Gale Macleod and Dr Joan Mowat and hosted at the University of Strathclyde, focussed on exploring the relationships lying at the intersection between poverty, attainment and mental health and wellbeing in children and young people and the implications for policy and practice. It was designed to attract a wider audience.

Day 1: A sense of belonging

The initial day focussed on our sub-theme of 'sense of belonging' with a highlight of the day being a short film of the work undertaken with children in Glasgow and Inverclyde and a panel discussion with the children who answered questions about their involvement. Key contributors to the day were:

- Professor Kathryn Riley, UCL
- Paula Dudgeon, Senior Educational Psychologist, Glasgow City Council
- Aileen Wilson, Children's Rights and Information Officer, Inverclyde Council
- The children and Pr7 teacher from St Rose of Lima Primary School, Glasgow & Inverclyde Academy
- Iain French, the 'WeCan' Project, Mental Health Foundation
- Place2Be and Children in Scotland
- Professor Divya Jindal-Snape, University of Dundee
- Bruce Adamson, Children's Commissioner Scotland
- Dr Gillean McCluskey, University of Edinburgh
- Dr Joan Mowat, University of Strathclyde

(The) relationship between poverty-attainment-wellbeing is very complex and varies from child to child. But positive relationships, a sense of personal agency and a feeling of belonging will help every child reach their fullest potential.

Theme of positive psychology – moving away from 'problems' to 'possibilities'. What is the purpose of education? No matter the question, 'relationships' is the answer.

A sense of belonging is key in getting pupils to buy in and engage in education.

Key Messages

A broad consensus arose around the importance of a sense of belonging to school with regard to the mental health, wellbeing and attainment of children and young people [20]. This is aligned with fostering respectful and caring relationships within the school community based on positive emotions – happiness, love, care, understanding, kindness and connection. A focus on children's rights and our obligation towards them should be at the centre of what we do in addressing the gap [12]. Having a sense of belonging – a sense of being somewhere where you can be confident that

Ensure that wellbeing – in its widest sense – remains a priority alongside attainment.

Poverty is political. While professionals acting with kindness and respect will help mitigate its effects to some extent,

you will fit in and feel safe in your identity – is central to positive wellbeing [20]. Schools can provide a point of continuity and stability in children's lives [20]. Relationships with teachers, opportunities to participate within engaging activities and places where children feel safe and secure are important aspects of a sense of belonging to school. Positive and supportive relationships with, and between, peers, teachers and families are key to feelings of school-belongingness during primary-secondary transitions [21]. Although there is an awareness of providing support to children with additional support needs during transitions, it is important to remember that transitions in themselves can lead to additional support needs for some children.

Poverty and mental health feature prominently in the concerns of children and young people across the country. Poverty is dispersed across communities. We need to recognise the impact of rural poverty and the experience of children growing up in poverty in affluent areas [22]. There is a need to invest in age-appropriate and timely support in a suitable geographical location for children and young people with acute mental illness and to improve access to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services [23]. However, the key priority for most children and young people is universal services in schools and the community to support wellbeing. A further priority is to reduce the stigma around mental illness by having conversations around mental health, supported by a highly skilled workforce.

There is a lot of excellent work going on in Scottish schools to address inequalities and signs that the actions taken are beginning to make a difference in terms of 'closing the gap' in attainment. However, this work needs to be understood within a broader framework of inequalities in society – the more unequal a society, the greater the social and health problems, with a range of indicators – health, education and life satisfaction - being poorer for children living in unequal societies [16, 17, 24, 25]. The Scottish Government statistics remind us of the enormity of the task. There is a great deal still to be achieved. In particular, there are groups of children living in poverty who are particularly at risk of under-achievement – those with additional support needs (and particularly those with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Needs) and children in the care system,

between them accounting for around 1/3rd of children living in poverty [3, 26].

The poverty-related attainment gap cannot be closed by schools alone. However, through collective (at a

in the end it will only be solved by redistribution of wealth.

Poverty is an enormous human rights issue – we won't fix the attainment gap without addressing inequality. We need to think of children, young people, their families and communities in the round - holistically.

Loved young people's engagement and participation – words – art – video – in the room.

Definitely look at how I can ensure some of the key messages can be communicated with our teachers – both in terms of what they already do very well and also to consider how we can improve belongingness in our schools!

Think carefully about language. Challenge structural issues. Focus on small day to day activities and activities which make a difference – smiles, kindness, care and love.

We are already very invested in nurture, positive relationships journey. I have taken away some practical strategies I will take back to my school, especially around 'belonging'.

Need to act and be 'fierce champions' for children and young people – we know lots about what we need to do and be to bring about change.



political and societal level) and individual action we can make a difference to the lives of children and young people and alleviate childhood poverty. We need to build strong networks of support around communities, families and schools and recognise that individual children can be disadvantaged and marginalised in multiple ways [3]. Therefore we need to focus on meeting individual needs, particularly for children most at risk of under-achievement. A key aspect of achieving this end is having a more holistic focus on children's education and achievements rather than focussing narrowly on attainment targets.

That poverty is a political choice that has a huge knock on effect. We need to tackle this to support children but change practice to meet the needs of children.

Day 2: Implications for Policy and Practice

Other than two keynote presentations, the two other events of the day were discussion groups focussing on the implications of what had been learned from the seminar series and a panel discussion facilitated by Ken Muir, CEO of the General Teaching Council for Scotland. Key contributors were:

- Professor Roger Slee, University of South Australia
- Maria Walker, Strategic Director, Education Scotland
- Patricia Watson, Assistant Director, Education Scotland
- Ken Muir, CEO GTCS
- Dr Geetha Marcus, University of Glasgow
- Tina Stone, Headteacher, Highland Region
- Professor John McKendrick, Glasgow Caledonian University

Implications for working with and supporting children

Empowering children and young people to have a voice in schools

Focus on wellbeing as route to attainment – not one or other

Need for structural change – existing structure impeding progress

Implications for working with and supporting families

(We) should not be working with children in isolation from families

Professionals need to really listen and there needs to be authentic engagement.

Structures prevent us from taking “human response” e.g. stopping teacher make a home visit.

Families know their needs best – professionals need to really listen and there needs to be authentic engagement.

Key Messages

Building on the message that we need to put inclusion at the heart of ‘closing the gap,’ creating inclusive school communities in which all children have a sense of belonging and agency and are valued for who they are, Professor Slee argued that we need to build the knowledge and dispositions of teachers and students/pupils to be inclusive and to reconsider the curriculum, pedagogy and the culture of the school in this light. This requires a different kind of knowledge to underpin teacher education and an examination of how funding and resources are allocated to build capacity within the system and do things differently [27].

It is recognised at a national level that building capacity in the system is key to success in ‘closing the gap.’ Positive changes have been observed in Scottish schools relating to culture and ethos; understanding of disadvantage and willingness to address it; improved use of data; and increased partnership working. According to Education Scotland, the next steps are to continue to build capacity in the system; improve and increase the sharing of practice; continue to ensure effective partnerships and build family engagement; ensure sustainability; and focus on rural poverty and hidden poverty. In order to achieve this, it is crucial to ‘take people with us’ within the context of a shifting landscape.

Additional Seminars

Two additional seminars were jointly hosted between SUII, the Scottish Educational Research Association (SERA) Leadership in Scottish Education Network (SERA LiSEN) and the University of Edinburgh. The two seminars, hosted at the University of Strathclyde and Edinburgh respectively, enabled audience members to interact in a more informal setting with the academics.

Meet the Author: A Conversation with Professor Kathryn Riley

This seminar centred on Professor Riley's new publication, 'Place, Belonging and School Leadership' [20]. Kathryn was introduced by Emeritus Professor John MacBeath who provided an insightful critique of the publication. The conversation was facilitated by Dr Joan Mowat with an opportunity thereafter for the audience to interact with Kathryn.



A Conversation with Professor Roger Slee



Pixabay Image

It's a long way down

"When people tell me inclusive education doesn't work, I tell them that's because it isn't inclusive education."

Jody Carr, Minister in the Province of New Brunswick, Canada in Slee 2018[27].

This seminar focussed on Roger's book, 'Inclusive Education Isn't Dead – it just smells funny.' Professor Slee was introduced by Emeritus Professor, Pamela Munn who also provided a very succinct and insightful summary at the end. The conversation was facilitated by Professor Sheila Riddell, University of Edinburgh. Roger talked about having the courage to take that leap of faith to create truly inclusive school communities.

3.3 Working with children and young people

The work with a Primary 7 class in St Rose of Lima Primary School and the Attainment Unit at Inverclyde Academy focussed on three questions:

1. What gives you a sense of belonging to school?

2. What doesn't give you a sense of belonging to school?
3. Why does a sense of belonging to school matter?

Children, working with their class teacher, pursued this through reading (a class text and a set of books provided for the Primary school), drawings, writing and photography (digital cameras provided) and created scrap books with their observations. The work was facilitated and supported by Aileen Wilson, Children's Rights and Information Officer, Inverclyde Council and Paula Dudgeon, Senior Educational Psychologist, Glasgow City Council. In the Primary school, group discussions were facilitated by the class teacher probing children's responses to the questions through their work and by Aileen Wilson in Inverclyde. These facilitated discussions were recorded on video and a short film made. The film was shown at Seminar 3 and the children came along to the seminar with their class teacher, Paula and Aileen and took questions from the audience. They were stars! The children were presented with a certificate and the schools provided with a copy of the video.

Link to Video

<https://www.scottishinsight.ac.uk/Programmes/OpenCall201819/PEAW/Seminar3/Day1/tabid/8438/Default.aspx>

3.4 Creative Visioning, Audio and Video Recordings and Twitter

A gallery of images of all contributions to the seminar series were produced and these have been digitised and placed on the website. They have served to highlight the key findings to emerge from the series. Almost all of the inputs to the seminar series have been captured either on audio- or video-stream and these have been placed on the webpage. A twitter feed was created #SUIPAW and the series attracted a lot of very positive feedback and reflective comments.

<https://www.scottishinsight.ac.uk/Programmes/OpenCall201819/PEAW.aspx>

3.5 Media Coverage

Both the Glasgow Herald and the Times Educational Supplement Scotland (TESS) were present at the seminar series. At the request of the editor, an article is due for publication in the TESS and, as Co-lead of the seminar series, Dr Joan Mowat was asked to comment for an article to be published in the Glasgow Herald.

4. Outcomes and (Expected) Impact

1. *Increased knowledge and understanding* of the relationships between poverty, attainment and children's mental health and wellbeing and of the key drivers of these relationships, as outlined above. The seminar series brought together an extensive range of people, representing sixteen academic disciplines and sixteen professions, and representatives from the policy community, including the Scottish Government and Education Scotland. This enabled *a multi-disciplinary focus on the problem* which, to this point, has largely been missing from the debate. It allowed for *shared understandings* to develop.
2. It provided an opportunity to *hear children's voices* in a meaningful way and their perspective on the problem. At the same time, it *enhanced their education* and their

own understanding of inclusive communities – what it means (or not) to belong and why this is important. These insights can then be shared through and beyond the wider school community through the work of the children and the short films of their work. It also provides a model which local authorities and schools can take forward to build and examine their practice in this area.

3. Through the seminar series itself, the production of the research briefs, digitised images, audio- and video-material, materials and links to research on the website and presence on social media the work now has *potential international reach*. The research briefs provide a detailed concise summary of what was found and implications for policy and practice directed towards specific audiences.
4. An *international perspective* was brought to bear on the seminar series through the transnational focus on sustainable cities; the keynote and other inputs from Professor Roger Slee, University of South Australia and from Professor Kathryn Riley, UCL; and the insights drawn from the international literature which were a feature of seminar one and informed the addresses of keynote speakers throughout the seminar series.
5. A very important outcome of the seminar series was the opportunity which it provided for *networking* and for *building partnerships*. Whilst it is not possible to measure this (potential future) impact, it became evident in examining the responses of participants to the seminar series that this is something which was already reaping rewards and which they intended to invest in.

Keynote Addresses, Seminar and Conference Presentations

McKendrick, J.H. (2018). *Scottish Social Security: Challenges Ahead*. Invited presentation at the Institute of Revenue, Ratings and Evaluation Annual Conference. Crieff Hydro, 5th Sept, 2018.

McKendrick, J.H. (2018). *Local Contributions to Tackling Poverty and Inequality in Scotland*. Invited presentation at the SPSE Scotland Soft Facilities Management Seminar 2018. Westerwood Hotel, Cumbernauld, 20th November, 2018.

McKendrick, J.H. (2018). *Keynote Address*. Launch of the Dundee poverty Truth Commission. Westerwood Hotel, Cumbernauld, Steeple Church, Dundee, 19th November, 2018.

McKendrick, J.H. (2018). *Child Poverty and education in Scotland*. Facing Up to Child Poverty Practice Network, University of Strathclyde, 5th December, 2018.

McKendrick, J.H. (2019). Free School meals in Scotland research project. Keynote address to the Assist FM Conference, Dunfermline, 26th February, 2019.

McKendrick, J.H. (2019). Panel discussion with Deputy First Education Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, *West Area Regional Improvement Collaborative Conference*. Celtic Park. 12th March, 2019.

McKendrick, J.H. (2019). Education and poverty: a tale of the Emperor's New Clothes, the silver bullet that felled the werewolf, or something else? *Educational Colloquium*, Glasgow, 13th June, 2019.

McKendrick, J.H. (2019). Keynote: Is PEF the silver bullet? *Pupil Equity Fund Conference, Renfrewshire Council*, Glasgow, 13th June, 2019.

McKendrick, J.H. (2019). CPD seminar: In conversation with John McKendrick: poverty in the early years, *Early Years Scotland*. Glasgow, 24th June, 2019.

- McKinney, S.J. (2018).** *Scotland In Symposium: Poverty And Education, Common Curricula In An Increasingly Divided Nation: Can Place-Based Approaches Heal The Divides?* Presented at BERA, Newcastle, 12th Sept, 2018.
- McKinney, S.J. (2018).** Symposium Chair: *Latest Developments In Research In Addressing The Impact Of Poverty On School Education.* Presented at SERA, University of Glasgow, 23rd Nov, 2018.
- Mowat, J.G. (2018).** *Understanding The Intersection Between Poverty, Attainment And Children's Mental Health And Wellbeing: The Implications For Leadership, Policy and Practice.* Paper presented at the European Conference for Educational Research (ECER), University of Bolzano, Italy, 4th -7th Sept, 2018.
- Mowat, J.G. (2018).** *Understanding the intersection between poverty, attainment & children's mental health & wellbeing: the implications for leadership, policy & practice.* School of Education, Seminar, 19th Dec, 2018.
- Mowat, J.G. (2019).** *Placing Health and Wellbeing at the Centre of 'Closing the Attainment Gap'.* Keynote address at the Health and Wellbeing in Curriculum for Excellence Conference, Edinburgh, 26th Feb, 2019.
- Mowat, J.G. (2019).** *A Tale of Two Clusters: Supporting the Transition for children with social, emotional and behavioural needs.* University of Dundee, 2nd May, 2019.

Publications

- Marryat, L., & Frank, J. (2019).** Factors associated with adverse childhood experiences in Scottish children: a prospective cohort study. *BMJ Paediatrics Open*, 2019. DOI: 10.1136/bmjpo-2018-000340
- J.H. McKendrick et al. (2019).** *Are pupils being served? A secondary review of the sector's evidence base on school meal provision at lunchtime in Scotland.* Report for ASSIST FM.
- J.H. McKendrick and Brown, J. (2019).** *Listening to the lived experience of poverty in Scotland: An evidence review of issues pertaining to income, expenditure and wealth.* Report for the Poverty and Inequality Commission (Scotland).
- Mowat, J.G. (2019).** Exploring the impact of social inequality and poverty on the mental health and wellbeing and attainment of children and young people in Scotland. *Improving Schools*, 1-20. doi: 10.1177/1365480219835323. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1365480219835323>
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Other Outreach

Dr Joan Mowat

1. Meeting with representatives from the National Health Service to discuss potential synergies between education and public health. Nov 22nd, 2018.
2. Meeting with South Lanarkshire to discuss potential consultancy arising from the seminar series. Jan 17th, 2019.
3. Participation in a National Adverse Childhood Experiences Roundtable organised by NHS Scotland, Feb 8th, 2019
4. Meeting with Billy Burke, President of School Leaders Scotland to discuss dissemination to Headteachers and Regional Improvement Collaboratives, 21st May, 2019.

Dr Joan Mowat & Dr Gale Macleod

1. Invitation to facilitate a staff development programme for the Forth Valley and West Lothian Regional Collaborative, 2019-2020.

Dr Louise Marryat

1. Participation in a National Adverse Childhood Experiences Roundtable organised by NHS Scotland, Feb 8th, 2019

6. Key Recommendations

1. Cross-political consensus is required to ensure that investment is long-term and sustainable, beyond the term of a single government.
2. The problem cannot be understood and resolved through education alone. From the level of government down, address the problem holistically across the public services which impact on it – education, health, social welfare, housing and employment – and invest in public services. Don't throw money at the problem!
3. Build on the work to reduce inequalities in society and to meet the targets of *Every Child, Every Chance*.
4. A rights agenda should underpin all of our work with children and families.
5. Reframe the narrative around poverty, attainment and wellbeing and prioritise health and wellbeing for all pupils – 'Better welfare – better relationships – better learning.' Reflect this in how we work with communities, families and children.
6. Rationalise educational policy such that a clear set of priorities emerge.
7. Invest in multi-disciplinary research (giving due consideration to qualitative studies) to measure impact of interventions and to inform future developments.
8. Invest in knowledge exchange such that professionals and academics with a focus on the problem have opportunities to meet, problem solve and work collaboratively together.
9. Target resources towards those children in greatest need and particularly those children lying at the intersection of poverty, additional support needs and/or looked after children, recognising that some children are multiply disadvantaged.
10. Get the balance right between autonomy and accountability for schools. Remove the bureaucracy from the Scottish Attainment Challenge which takes school leaders and teachers away from their core purpose.
11. Build a coherent picture of practice which is research-informed.
12. Put the role of universities much more central to closing the gap and draw more fully on their expertise.
13. Build strong infrastructures and networks of support around communities, families and schools through investment in services such as educational psychology, speech therapy, children's social care, CAMHS, counselling, home-link services ...
14. Invest in the education of the teaching profession around poverty and its impact, and mental health and wellbeing (including supporting children with social, emotional and behavioural needs).
15. Poverty proof the school and ameliorate the impact of food poverty through provision.
16. Listen to and respect the voices of the community, families and children and foster parental engagement in children's learning. Parents and children should be active agents in the change process.
17. Adopt a holistic approach when working with children and their families.
18. Recognise the professionalism and judgement of teachers.
19. Create the time and space within schools for collaborative working around the problem.
20. *We have individual and collective agency to make a difference in the lives of children and young people living in poverty* – be optimistic in outlook and fierce champions of children and young people.

7. Planned Follow up Activities

Dissemination Event

A dissemination event is planned for Monday 10th of June, 2019 at the University of Strathclyde. The format of the event will be an overview of the main messages to emerge from the seminar series followed by an opportunity for audience discussion. The research briefs will be made available at the event. It will conclude with a discussion of next steps for moving forward.

SERA Conference

An abstract to host a roundtable discussion has been submitted, 'Reflecting on the seminar series – Poverty, Attainment and Wellbeing: Making a Difference to the Lives of Children and Young People.' It will be hosted jointly by the SERA Poverty Network and Leadership in Scottish Education Network and will be led by Dr Joan Mowat (Co-lead seminar series and Co-convenor of SERA LiSEN), Professor Stephen McKinney and Professor John McKendrick (Co-convenors of the SERA poverty and education network) and Dr Gale Macleod (Co-lead seminar series).

Meeting with Education Scotland

A meeting is taking place in June between Patricia Watson, Assistant Director at Education Scotland and the programme leads to discuss the research briefs and how to move forward to build on the work of the seminar series.

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